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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL  
(19-25 AUGUST 1968)

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27 AUGUST 1968

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
27 August 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Activities in North Vietnam  
South of the 20th Parallel  
(19-25 August 1968)

Summary

North Vietnamese military and logistic activities south of the 20th Parallel remained at a high level, although hampered by flooding and US air attacks. Watercraft sightings remained high, and new logistics facilities continued to be detected. Truck sightings increased from last week, but continued below the weekly average noted since 31 March. Supply movements [redacted]

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[redacted] have continued to decline from the high levels noted since last March. This decline is due apparently to the extensive disruption caused by the floods rather than to any positive decision to slow down logistics activities.

The flooding north of the 20th Parallel is more severe than any noted since the start of the Rolling Thunder program. Damage to highway and rail facilities has been unusually widespread, and North Vietnam will be more dependent on waterborne transport for an unknown but substantial period of time.

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*Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.*

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Logistic Facilities

1. New truck parks, storage areas, and transshipment areas continue to be detected [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] A new truck park/POL storage area with vehicle maintenance facilities has been identified about 15 miles north of the Mu Gia Pass along Route 15 (see Figure 1). The area showed signs of heavy use and was probably established as a dispersed alternate to Bai Duc Thom, 10 miles north at the junction of Routes 15 and 151, which has been under frequent attack. Several new truck parks have also been observed along Route 151 between Routes 82 and 15. Further south, three new road-to-water transshipment areas have been identified along Route 101 east of the intersection with Route 137. Extensive open storage of crates and boxes, sacks, and POL was noted in each of the three areas, and heavy track and trail usage indicated a high level of activity. These new transshipment areas are strategically located near the Nguon Nay inland waterway, Quang Khe, and the large storage areas at Tien Luong.

Truck Traffic

2. [REDACTED] this past week were up 30 percent over last week's low figure, but were still 25 percent below the weekly average noted since 1 April. [REDACTED]

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traffic that could not be quantified suggest, however, that truck activity within the Panhandle was much greater than that reflected in the tabulation below. The number of trucks reported destroyed was the highest weekly total since 1 January. This number is, of course, preliminary but is particularly unusual when compared with the small number of trucks reported as damaged during the same period. There is no obvious explanation for the abnormal increase in vehicles reported as destroyed, although improved weather in scattered areas of the Panhandle and a 25-percent increase in the rate of attack may explain at least part of the increase.

|                                       | Trucks         |                              |                |                                     |                               |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                       | <u>Sighted</u> | <u>De-</u><br><u>stroyed</u> | <u>Damaged</u> | Total<br>Destroyed<br>or<br>Damaged | Effective<br>Losses <u>a/</u> |
| This week<br>(19-25 Aug) <u>b/</u>    | 529            | 247                          | 29             | 276                                 | 192                           |
| Last week<br>(12-18 Aug)              | 407            | 69                           | 45             | 114                                 | 63                            |
| Weekly<br>average<br>(since<br>1 Apr) | 702            | 125                          | 80             | 205                                 | 114                           |

b. Preliminary data.

3. Although most truck sightings this week were small groups of less than five vehicles, several moderate-sized truck concentrations were detected. Thirty trucks were observed parked along Route 1A just south of Ron. Fifteen of these were destroyed in ensuing attacks. More than 25 camouflaged trucks were discovered in a truck park located on Route 82 south of the Linh Cam Ferry. [redacted]

[redacted] destroying at least 23 vehicles at this site. Two vehicle convoys of about 20 trucks each were sighted heading south along Route 15 near the junction of Routes 15 and 101. Results of attacks against these convoys are unknown.

4. Highway chokepoints, storage areas, and transshipment points located along the major highways leading toward southern Laos and the DMZ were heavily attacked. A large number of the attacks resulted in multiple secondary explosions, indicating large stores of POL and ammunition.

Waterways

5. [redacted] watercraft activity this week continued at the same high level noted since mid-July. During the past five weeks, observed watercraft activity has been more than double that of any comparable period since 31 March. The heaviest watercraft movements noted this week were on the Dai Giang, southwest of Dong Hoi, and on the Nguon Nay near Quang Khe.

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7. The apparent slowdown in logistics traffic probably results more from the heavy rain and

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flooding in North Vietnam than it does from a decision to cut back on logistics activity.

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Rains which began on 9 August and a typhoon which struck on 13 August have caused more severe and more extensive flooding of the North Vietnamese transportation system than any observed since the beginning of the Rolling Thunder program in 1965. Transportation in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, on the Haiphong and Lao Cai railroad lines, and on the Vinh line at Ninh Binh has been seriously disrupted.

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8. [ ] shows five miles of the Haiphong railroad line east of Hai Duong to be inundated (see Figure 2). In addition, the main railroad bridge at Hai Duong East was severely damaged by the floods, and the bypass railroad bridge also appeared to be damaged. The bypass to the railroad bridge over the Song Thai Binh, also at Hai Duong, was damaged; the main bridge at this location was not observed. Route 5, which parallels the railroad line between Hanoi and Haiphong, was also completely flooded in spots. In some areas the flooding extended as much as five miles on either side of several of the main river channels in the Red River Delta, disrupting highway and, to some extent, waterway traffic in the region.

9. Extensive flooding on the Lao Cai line was observed between Yen Bai and Kinh No. The railroad ferry slips at Viet Tri were inundated and unserviceable, and the highway pontoon bridges and highway ferries were also washed out. The highway cable bridge was serviceable, but there was no vehicle traffic observed. Several sections of the roadbed about 25 miles north of Viet Tri were washed out, as were several roads which parallel the Red River and the rail line between Viet Tri and Lao Cai.

10. The important Dong Dang railroad was not completely observed, thus the extent of any flooding could not be determined. The observed portions were on high ground, no flooding appeared, and traffic was normal.

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roads to be inundated. The rail lines in the immediate Hanoi area were not observed, but a train and several trucks were sighted crossing the Doumer Bridge at Hanoi.

11. Rail and highway traffic south of Hanoi was also disrupted by flooding of the Song Day at Ninh Binh. The main bridge is washed out and by-passes are flooded.

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12. The severity of the flooding, the key regions it has affected, and the widespread areas covered impose substantial problems for the North Vietnamese transport system. Reconstruction of the railroad roadbeds on the Haiphong and Lao Cai lines and of key roads will require considerable time and effort. While past experience has shown that the North Vietnamese, aided by Chinese engineering units, are masters at providing alternate means to maintain the flow of traffic, the widespread flooding of key facilities has negated much of these efforts, and extensive repairs to the basic system are now necessary. During the time that land transport remains disturbed by flooding and its effects, water traffic will have to assume the major responsibility for moving goods. However, the flooding has undoubtedly affected key transshipment and storage areas, thereby hindering water traffic also.

#### Air Operations

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MIG-21 fighters ranged southward [REDACTED] in several attempts to intercept US aircraft bombing targets in the Panhandle. No US losses were reported, however, although enemy planes fired three air-to-air missiles at US aircraft on 25 August.

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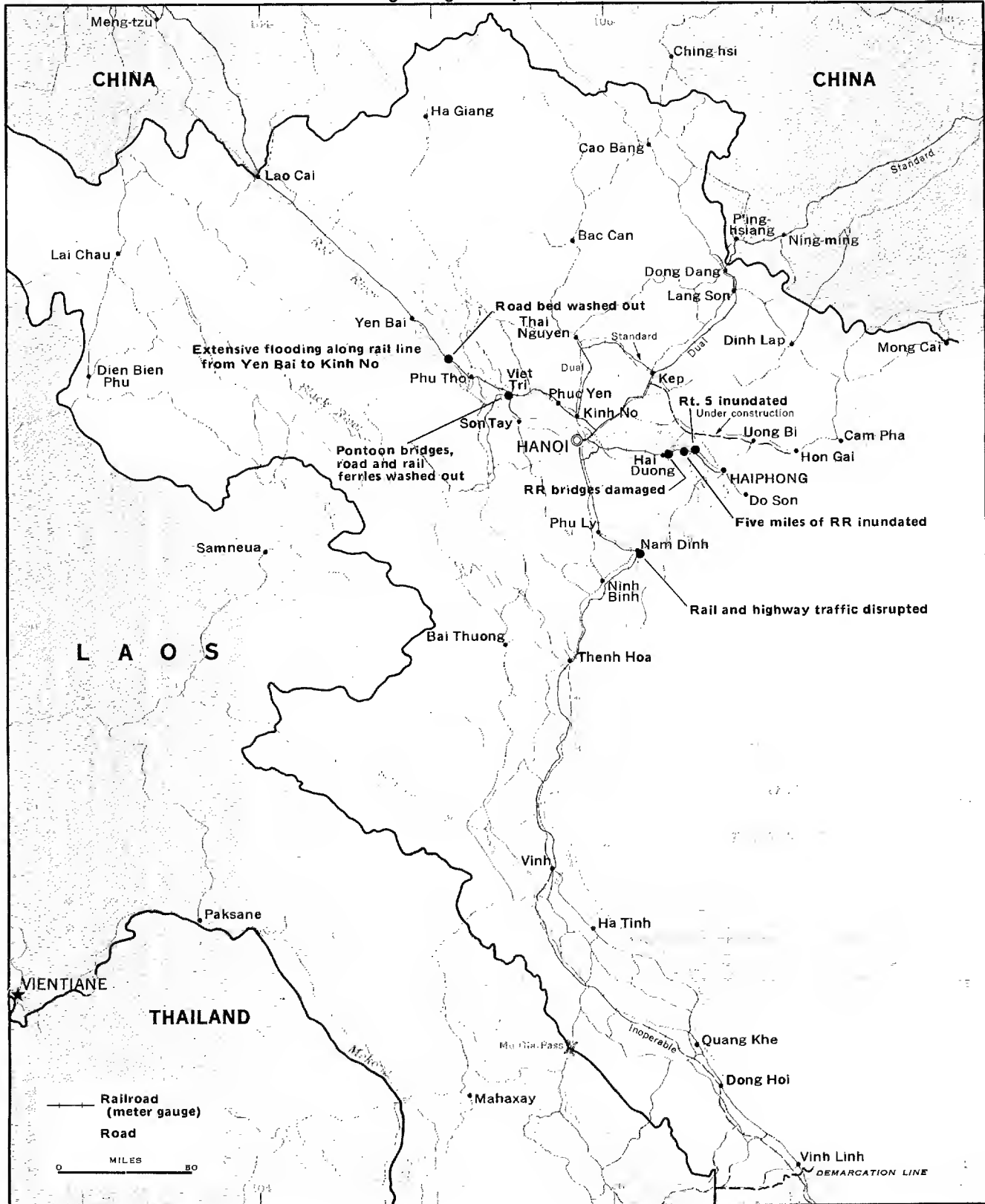


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# NORTH VIETNAM: Extensive Flooding along Transportation Lines



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